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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
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3/8. Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 1/7 on strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality, by which the Assembly encouraged member States to take action to address air pollution,

Acknowledging the work of some initiatives, such as the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, that can inspire countries to take action to improve air quality and protect human health,

Reaffirming the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in which countries committed to promoting sustainable development policies that supported healthy air quality in the context of sustainable cities and human settlements, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which outlines a road map to achieving sustainable development, environmental protection and prosperity for all, and recognizing that air pollution abatement is important to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing that air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health and one of the main avoidable causes of death and disease globally, with some estimated 6.5 million premature deaths[1] across the world attributed to indoor and outdoor air pollution, and recognizing that particularly in developing countries air pollution disproportionately affects women, children and the elderly, especially in low-income populations as they are often exposed to high levels of ambient air pollution and indoor air pollution from cooking and heating with wood fuel and kerosene,

Concerned that air pollution is a global problem with far-reaching impacts owing to its transport over long distances and that, in the absence of aggressive intervention, the number of premature deaths resulting from ambient air pollution is estimated to be on track to increase by more than 50 per cent by 2050,[2]

Concerned also by the high costs to society of air pollution owing to the negative impacts on the economy, work productivity, health care costs and tourism, among others, and noting the economic benefits of investing in air pollution control and therefore understanding that there is also an economic rationale to act and that cost-effective solutions exist to address air pollution,

[1] *Ambient Air Pollution: A global assessment of exposure and burden of disease*, World Health Organization (2016). Available from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/250141/1/9789241511353-eng.pdf.

[2] *The Lancet Commission on pollution and health*, London, 19 October 2017. Available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32345-0.

Mindful that poor air quality is a challenge in the context of sustainable development for all countries, in particular in cities and urban areas in developing countries, with levels of air pollution that are higher than the limits set out in the World Health Organization air quality guidelines,

Recognizing that some air pollutants, such as black carbon, methane and ground-level ozone, are also short-lived climate pollutants and are responsible for a significant portion of air pollution-related deaths, as well as impacts on crops and hence food security, and that their reduction has co-benefits for the climate,

Noting the voluntary reduction commitments and cooperative efforts by some member States to reduce emissions of black carbon, such as the aspirational collective goal set out in the 2017 Fairbanks Declaration of the Arctic Council,

Acknowledging that air pollution affects several aspects of society and that addressing air pollution results in multiple benefits to human health, the economy, ecosystems and climate, and that efforts across sectors are needed to improve air quality,

1. *Reaffirms* the call in United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/7 for member States to take action across sectors to reduce all forms of air pollution and urges member States:

(a) To establish relevant systems to monitor air pollution, in order to be well informed of the state of air quality and sources of pollution in affected areas and to support improved air quality management;

(b) To set ambitious ambient air quality standards taking into account guidelines from the World Health Organization;

(c) To include, as appropriate, air pollutants that are also short-lived climate pollutants in national action programmes to prevent and reduce air pollution;

(d) To put in place policies and measures to prevent and reduce air pollution from their significant sources;

(e) To integrate and strengthen air pollution management aspects in the national development agenda, and to internalize pollution costs;

(f) To create awareness at the local, subnational and national levels and within the private sector of the negative environmental, health and socioeconomic impacts of pollution, as well as the economic benefits of taking action;

(g) To strengthen capacities to develop national and subnational emissions inventories as an input to prioritize sectors and activities to further promote emissions reduction measures;

2. *Encourages* member States when undertaking activities in paragraph 1 above:

(a) To consider using available tools, including the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air, to inspire, as appropriate, national action to improve air quality and protect public health and ecosystems;

(b) To consider joining or cooperating with, as appropriate, relevant global initiatives such as the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants and the Global Methane Initiative;

(c) To facilitate action to reduce air pollution in urban and rural areas including by encouraging cities and local governments to consider participating in, as appropriate, the BreatheLife campaign;

3. *Also encourages* member States when undertaking activities in paragraph 1 (c) above:

(a) To develop and implement national methane reductions strategies, where appropriate, that could target key methane-emitting sectors;

(b) To prioritize measures to reduce particulate matter that also reduce black carbon emissions;

4. *Encourages* Governments to pursue synergies and co-benefits between national clean air policies and policies in key areas such as transport, including vehicle emissions and fuel standards, urbanization, climate change, energy access and agriculture, and to take advantage of the synergistic effects of efficient nitrogen management on reducing air, marine and water pollution;

5. *Stresses* the need for further sharing of existing knowledge by:

(a) Engaging in regional cooperation on science, technology, policy, measures and best practices related to addressing air pollution;

(b) Sharing of knowledge among existing and any future regional cooperation forums, such as the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership and Africa Sustainable Transport Forum, in order to benefit from their experience and expertise on the topics in subparagraph (a) above, including by participating in expert workshops and other meetings in those forums, as appropriate;

6. *Calls on* member States to pursue a shared response and to identify solutions to address air pollution, including by:

(a) Strengthening intergovernmental cooperation to address and reduce the negative impacts of air pollution;

(b) Promoting increased cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and relevant international organizations in order to strengthen the actions of those organizations on air quality;

(c) Maximizing the efficiencies and synergies between the contributions of partners and international financing institutions and other funding organizations to facilitate action, including regional and national initiatives, to address air pollution;

(d) Inviting member States in a position to do so, financial institutions and the private sector to contribute technical and financial support towards regional and national initiatives to address air pollution;

(e) Participating in workshops for experts to share information and best practices on approaches, measures and capacity-building;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director, within available resources:

(a) To deliver information to stakeholders on the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants and assist in the implementation, as appropriate, of the Global Strategy to Introduce Low-Sulfur Fuels and Cleaner Diesel Vehicles; [3]

(b) To assist in the implementation of the Road Map for Clean Fuel and Vehicle Standards in Southern and Western Africa and the Africa Sustainable Transport Forum Action Plan;

(c) To support the enhancement of regional cooperation to address air pollution, including transboundary air pollution for interested member States, in the areas of science, technology, policy, measures and best practices, in close cooperation with relevant initiatives, including the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership, and to organize regional communities of practice for air quality management through the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme;

(d) To provide a platform for cooperation and information sharing between interested member States and relevant organizations working to reduce air pollution, such as the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and other organizations, and to house capacity-building resources and online tools that enable member States to use existing air quality data to support policymaking and decision-making;

(e) To continue to support countries, in particular developing countries, in putting in place affordable air quality networks that will raise awareness among citizens about pollution levels and their impact on human health and the environment, and to produce regional assessments of capacity needs based on input from communities of practice;

(f) To strengthen technical support provided by global and regional networks, as appropriate, and to enhance institutional capacity to develop air pollution action plans, particularly within the environment and health sectors, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, and for specific issues, including in particular indoor air pollution;

(g) To support member States in identifying, prioritizing and addressing key sources of air pollution;

(h) To support developing countries in expanding the use of cleaner fuels for cooking to prevent and reduce indoor air pollution by cooperating with partners to promote sustainable finance, investment mechanisms, innovative and technological solutions, and education and public awareness;

[3] *Cleaning Up the Global On-Road Diesel Fleet: A global strategy to introduce low-sulfur fuel and cleaner diesel vehicles*, United Nations Environment Programme (2016).

(i) To assess gaps in, and opportunities for, mitigation and cooperation with a view to advancing a shared response to addressing air pollution globally;

(j) To undertake an assessment of progress being made by member States to adopt and implement key actions that can significantly improve air quality in time for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and thereafter, synchronized with the Global Environment Outlook cycle;

8. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution.